

yaʔtmín cq^wəlq^wilt nix^w, ul nix^w, ul nix^w, *I need to speak more, and more, and more: Okanagan-Colville (Interior Salish) Indigenous second-language learners share our filmed narratives*

Michele K. Johnson (Sʔímlaʔx^w)
University of British Columbia-Okanagan

wayʔ, isk^wíst, *my name is*, Sʔímlaʔx^w, and I am from Penticton BC, Canada. kn sqilx^w. I am a Syilx (Okanagan, Interior Salish) adult language learner. My cohort and I are midway in our language transformation to become proficient speakers. Our names are Prasát, Sʔímlaʔx^w, Cʔərtups, ǂwámǂnam, Staʔqʷálqs, and our Elder, Sʔamtícʷaʔ. We created an adult immersion house, deep in Syilx territory, and lived and studied together for five months. We combined intensive curricular study, cutting-edge second-language acquisition techniques, filmed assessments, and immersion with our Elder. We emerged transformed—we are nʔəq^wcin, *clear speakers*, speaking at an intermediate level. There has been very little written about assessment of Indigenous language teaching methods or Indigenous language speaking ability, and much less written about filmed learning and assessment. Three films were created in our language, nqilx^wcn, and placed on YouTube. The films give primacy to our personal narratives, document and share our transformation, speaking abilities, grassroots language activism and learning methods. This paper describes the films, my cohort's transformation, assesses our speaking ability, describes Paul Creek Language Association curriculum, and represents a contribution to Indigenous language teaching methods, assessment and nqilx^wcn revitalization.

isk^wíst Sʔímlaʔx^w, kn ʔl snpintktn. kn sqilx^w ul kn səcmipn^wfn nqilx^wcn. axáʔ inqəy^wmín iscmáʔmáý. kwu kcilcəlkst k^wu capsíwš, iʔ sqəlx^wsk^wsk^wístət Prasát, Sʔímlaʔx^w, Cʔərtups, ǂwámǂnam, Staʔqʷálqs, naʔi iʔ ǂǂaptət, Sʔamtícʷaʔ. k^wu k^wliwt ʔ nqilx^wcn iʔ citx^wtət cilkst iʔ ǂyaʔnəǂ^w ul isck^wúl kaʔhš iʔ tə syaʔyáʔǂaʔ. iʔ ʔ syaʔyáʔǂaʔtət, caʔk^w mi wikntp iʔ scmamáýaʔtət iʔ kʔyankxó nqilx^wcn iʔ scʔaʔáʔs, k^wu cnqilx^wcnm, k^wu səck^waʔk^wúlm nqilx^wcn, ul k^wu ǂəst^wilx iʔ scq^waʔq^wáltət. xəǂxəǂt iʔ scǂ^wultət, naxəmf ksxan iʔ ʔl silíʔtət iʔ ʔ kiʔláwnaʔ iʔ sníliʔtns k^wu ctix^wlm. ʔapnáʔ k^wu capsíwš ul k^wu nʔəq^wcin. wtntím iʔ syaʔyáʔǂaʔtət ʔ YouTube ul iʔ scǂminktət caʔkw ksʔaysnwím iʔ scsmamáýtət, kʔyankxó iʔ scǂ^wúlsəlx, ul caʔk^w cʔkin iʔ ʔ sk^waʔk^wúlm iʔ nqəlqilx^wcn iʔ kscmamáýaʔx, ul caʔk^w mi ʔx^wlál aʔ nqəlqilx^wcntət.

1. INTRODUCTION¹. According to our Syilx (Okanagan, Interior Salish) way, personal introductions come before all other narrations. My name is Sʔímlaʔx^w, I am from Penticton BC, Canada. sqilx^w ul suyápix isʔax^wíps. I am mixed-heritage and related to the Simla and Richter families in Syilx Okanagan territory. I am a Syilx Indigenous adult second-language learner, studying nqilx^wcn (Nʔsyilx^wcn)² our language. My cohort of four

¹ An earlier version of this article appeared as a chapter in my dissertation (Johnson 2013).

² Nʔsyilx^wcn and nqilx^wcn are names for the Interior Salish language spoken in Syilx territory, Interior Plateau North America; I use them interchangeably though they have a subtle difference

women and I lived and studied in an adult immersion house, deep in Syilx territory from January to May 2011, and documented our transformation in three films.³ Our names are Prasát, C'ər'tups, X'wámx'wnam, Sta?q'álqs, and our Elder, S'amtíc'a?. Following Syilx protocol, our Elder speaks first:

(1) **S'amtíc'a?**: kn alá? l' spəp'ámsalq'w, incá isk'íst S'amtíc'a?. alá? cy'áp i? smamím. x'minksəlx ca?k'w mipn'wifn t' ksnqilx'cnmsəlx. uł alá?əlx uł t'i kmax nqilx'cn i? ksq'iq'wiltəlx. əcmáytwix'w, uł mamáya?məlx, uł way' ta?lí n'laq'cinəlx.

Translation:

S'amtíc'a?: I am here at spəp'ámsalq'w [treeline, South end of Chopaka road], my name is S'amtíc'a?. The women arrived here. They wanted to learn to speak nqilx'cn. They stayed together here and did nqilx'cn immersion. They told each other stories and they studied. They now speak very clearly (S'amtíc'a?, *k'wu n'laq'cin* 00:33).

We emerged after five months, transformed—we are now n'laq'cin, *clear speakers*. We are midway through our language transformation from k'lp'x'w'ina?, *ears opened* (comprehension phase), to n'tłcin, *straightened or true speech*. In our films we express a shared goal of achieving n'tłcin speech and a belief that this is possible:

(2) **Prasát**: I believe I'm gonna be fluent. I believe I will be fluent before I leave this world. It's gonna take me a while, but—I feel that for all of us, we're on the edge of something (Prasát, our eldest learner, in *k'wu n'laq'cin* 01:55).

X'wámx'wnam: lut tə titiyam i? sc'k'w'ultət. ta?lí xəčxačt. naxəmt' incá kn səcmipn'wifn inq'w'ilt. uł ... ya?tmín q'wə'wilt nix'w, uł nix'w, ul nix'w (04:10). . . kn musls . . . iscq'w'ilt t'lałt, uł cxił t' in'łxə'łx'áp, uł Syilx i? cawtət (05:20).

Translation:

X'wámx'wnam: Our work wasn't easy. It was very hard. But I am learning to speak my language. I need [to] speak more, and more, and more (04:10) . . . I hope—my speech will be straight and true like my grandparents, and our Syilx ways of being (*k'wu n'laq'cin* 05:20).

in meaning. N'syilxcn Language Map: <http://maps.fphlcc.ca/fphlcc/nsyilxcn>. N'syilxcn (spelled N'səlxcin in the southern part of our territory) is written with a variation of the International Phonetic Alphabet. See and listen to the letters of the N'syilxcn Alphabet Song at www.interiorsalish.com (resources). I offer gratitude to my teachers and language family, Paul Creek, En'owkin Centre, and University of British Columbia, and take humble responsibility for my transcriptions, translations, and learner's mistakes.

³ Our three films are Goldilocks I [youtube.be/KVj3vpCf6JE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVj3vpCf6JE); Goldilocks II [youtube.be/O7fFMN-KSa4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrlrw_kwu_n'laq'cin). Background to our language house, my personal story and further reflections are shared in Johnson 2012 and 2013.

I gathered our narratives into three short films, *Goldilocks I*, *Goldilocks II* and *kʷu nʷləqʷcin*. The films were posted on YouTube entirely in Nʷsyilxcn, in order to share our narratives, our learning methods, and document our transformation, in our own words, in our own language. This paper describes the three films, our speaking abilities, our learning methods, and provides a preliminary method of assessment of Indigenous second-language learning levels.

I first place this research in the context of our sqəlxcʷcawt, *Syilx ways of being*, second in our own words, third in the context of Nʷsyilxcn second-language acquisition, fourth in the context of second-language assessments, and finally in the context of Indigenous film. In sqəlxcʷcawt, as in many other Indigenous methodologies, our personal narrative, set in our particular communities, takes primacy over outside methodological generalizations. The term second language acquisition (SLA) reflects that Nʷsyilxcn is presently not learned in the home as children, and is therefore learned as a second-language. The ultimate goal of language revitalization is to bring language back into the home. Second language acquisition tools are speeding Nʷsyilxcn and other Indigenous languages' revitalization, discussed further in my dissertation.

In the discussion following each film's narrative, I describe Nʷsyilxcn phases of language acquisition from kʷlpʷxʷinaʷ, *ears opened*, or comprehension phase, to nʷtʰcin, *straightened or true speech*—it is important to be able to discuss our learning about the language *in* the language. I then introduce the topic of Indigenous second-language assessment and apply assessment benchmarks to our narrative, providing a preliminary method of Indigenous second-language assessment following from the work of others in this field (Edmonds et al. 2013; Miller 2004; Peter et al. 2003; Underriner, Fernandes & Atkins 2012). In language assessment terms, we progressed from mid-beginner to low-intermediate speaking level.⁴ In an oral language such as Nʷsyilxcn, film is an excellent medium for sharing personal narrative with our community and providing a record of our transformation. Oral filmed narrative allows interlocutors to speak for themselves. We found filming to be a motivating process and I hope our transformation may inspire other Indigenous language learners. In a later section I discuss the potential of film within Indigenous language learning, and an emergent wave of Indigenous and non-Indigenous language learners on YouTube.

2. CHARACTERS AND CONTEXT OF THE LANGUAGE HOUSE FILMS. This section introduces our language, provides background to The Paul Creek Language Association (TPCLA), gratefully acknowledges our Elder Sʷamtícʷaʷ (Sarah Peterson), our Paul Creek language teacher, facilitator, and curriculum developer, Chris Parkin, my language cohort, and provides a context to the language house.

Our language is Nʷsyilxcn, also known as nqilxcʷcn, Okanagan, Colville, Okanagan-Colville, Interior Salish, Salish, Sinixt, and simply *the language*. Nʷsyilxcn is embedded in the Interior Plateau, straddling present-day British Columbia and Washington. In our language we are sqilxcʷ, *Indigenous person, or animal being (tmixʷ) with the power to dream in a cyclical way*, and Syilx, *stranded together like a rope*. These two words,

⁴ The terms *beginner*, *intermediate*, and *advanced* (with low-, mid-, and high- benchmarks) are derived from CLB 2006, ACTFL 2012, and Miller 2004, explored further below.

translated simply as *people* or *Salish people* in English, demonstrate that our way of being, including our roles as humans and our connections to each other, the land and the seasons, is embedded in our language.

Our language, like many Indigenous languages, is critically endangered (Norris 2011). It is currently spoken by fewer than one hundred and fifty people, most of them Elders (Cohen 2010, FPCC 2012), and can be heard only at special occasions, ceremonies, and in classrooms. However there are several dedicated activists who are bringing N'syilxcn back into public use and are creating speakers in a sequential, replicable manner. I believe the activism, teaching methods, assessments and techniques shared in this article may be of value to other critically endangered Indigenous languages.

Limlmtp, *thank you*; I gratefully acknowledge The Paul Creek Language Association, based in Keremeos, BC, Canada, and its sister organization the Salish School of Spokane, based in Spokane, Washington. S'amtic'a? (Sarah Peterson), Chris Parkin and LaRae Wiley formed The Paul Creek Language Association ten years ago and have worked tirelessly ever since to organize language courses and co-author an impressive amount of curriculum including textbooks, teaching manuals, audio recordings, computer games, stories, math and science textbooks, and songs. The Paul Creek Language Association created a sequenced series of six textbooks, associated audio recordings and interactive software, designed to bring learners from beginner to advanced over the course of two years of full-time study (Peterson et al. 2006).⁵ These materials are designed to be taught by beginning learners and employ second-language acquisition techniques including repetition, scaffolding, constant review, assessment, interactive exercises and games. The sequenced material has been translated into and is being taught full-time in three Interior Salish languages. The Paul Creek Language Association's contribution to Interior Salish languages, including N'syilxcn, is broad and deep and felt throughout Interior Salish territories. For the past five years TPCLA has organized a Celebrating Salish language conference in Spokane Washington, attended by over 500 people from several Interior Salish Nations, now co-organized by the Salish School of Spokane and the Kalispel Tribe (Hval 2013).⁶

Limlmtx, *thank you*; I gratefully acknowledge our brilliant, tireless and infinitely patient Elder S'amtic'a? (Sarah Peterson), from klyankxó (Paul Creek), near Keremeos British Columbia, Canada. S'amtic'a?'s voice is well known among N'syilxcn language learners; she has recorded literally thousands of words and sentences for the Paul Creek curriculum, and continues to provide immersion instruction to learners.

Limlmtp, *thank you*; I gratefully acknowledge Chris Parkin and LaRae Wiley, our tireless language activists, organizers and curriculum developers. I am inspired by their unending enthusiasm, creativity, optimism and personal and professional commitment to N'syilxcn, and by their creation of a full-time N'syilxcn domain: a language nest and grades one-to-four immersion school, the Salish School of Spokane, Washington.

⁵ TPCLA's 6 textbooks are in three levels: 1 beginner, 2 intermediate, and 3 advanced. Download at: www.interiorsalish.com/linksnews.html and www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/oka. Since the time of this research much of TPCLA's publishing has shifted to their partner, the Salish School of Spokane, but for simplicity I refer to their material as TPCLA material.

⁶ Kalispel Tribe Celebrating Salish Conference: www.kalispeltribe.com/celebrating-salish-conference/. See Hval 2013 for background to conference and TPCLA curriculum.

Limlmtp, *thank you*; I gratefully acknowledge my capsíw's, a kinship term for *my language sisters, my language cohort*: Prasát, C'ərtups, X'wámǎ'wnam, and Sta?q'wálqs (Shelly Boyd, Carmella Alexis, Brandy Baptiste, and Hailey Causton). My capsíw's and I come from five separate communities within N'syilxcn-speaking territory and were brought together by our shared commitment to the language. We met and began our language journey in beginner classes organized by TPCLA in Keremeos British Columbia, Canada and in Inchelium Washington (shared in Johnson 2012, 2013).

Prior to moving into the house each capsíw's had slightly differing language abilities, though we had each completed the first two books, level 1 TPCLA material, 180 hours of intensive classroom time, taught in immersion. None of us grew up with N'syilxcn speakers, though X'wámǎ'wnam was sometimes exposed to her grandparents' fluent speech. C'ərtups, X'wámǎ'wnam and I had previously attended beginner language courses through the En'owkin Centre in Penticton BC. X'wámǎ'wnam had previously studied N'syilxcn 2 in Omak, WA, and taught N'syilxcn 1 and Captík'wł 1 to C'ərtups, Sta?q'wálqs and I over the previous year. We decided to form a language house, basically creating our own intensive live-in university, as volunteer activist learners. We based our participation on having completed the first two books of TPCLA curriculum. My capsíw's and I felt called upon to form the first N'syilxcn immersion house and commit to a five-month intensive transformative experience. We moved into a house together because each of us came from separate communities, several hours apart. Most of us were unfunded. Sta?q'wálqs had funding from the Westbank Band, which funded her living expenses. We fundraised to pay our rent and S'amtic'a?'s time.

Although we were beginner speakers, we were highly motivated learners and committed to become the first group to learn the next two books of TPCLA material. Because we were the first group, we had to learn without a teacher. Our language is critically endangered; no new speakers have emerged in fifty years—other than Chris and LaRae who became proficient by writing and teaching TPCLA curriculum, and one other teacher in Washington. My cohort and I realized we were attempting something difficult, perhaps impossible, but we believed the curriculum would provide a focus, and intensive study time would help us become speakers. Chris Parkin provided a learning schedule and TPCLA curriculum and visited the house regularly to train us in materials and co-teaching methods and to collect assessments.

My capsíw's and I studied and lived nqilx'wcn between January and May 2011. Our situation was unusual among adult Indigenous-language learners (of endangered languages) in that we had a comprehensive curriculum (Hinton 2011:308) and measured our progress through regular testing and assessment (Haynes et al. 2010, Peter et al. 2003). We met four days a week for five months and followed a strict no-English rule from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Our learning was intensive: curriculum-based lessons four hours a day, or approximately 305 hours total classroom time. We had 1.5 hours a day of immersion visits with S'amtic'a?', or approximately 115 hours total. Classroom time and immersion visits totaled 420 intensive immersion hours. We studied the third and fourth books of TPCLA's six-book curriculum, wrote quizzes each day, took oral and written exams at regular intervals, and produced a filmed assessment at the beginning and end of our program.

Our immersion house was a spacious five-bedroom house in a beautiful, remote, forested valley bottom, practically straddling a sparsely populated section of the Canada/United States border. Our location was the Lower Similkameen Indian Band reserve, across the Similkameen River from Keremeos, BC, nestled at the base of Chopaka Mountain. Our neighbors included two Elder speakers, Sʔaláwat (Tony Qualtier) and Qʔiyusálxqn (Herman Edward) who were regular visitors to the house.

3. sqəlxʷcawtət (OUR WAYS). Grizzly wends her way through my thoughts on our language house experience. Grizzly bears, specifically females, are powerful figures in captíkʷł, *story*, representing mothering, cultural transmission, language abilities, and care of children (Wickwire 2001). In one of our captíkʷł, a Grizzly mother rescues a young boy who was abandoned by his community, and takes him into her den for two years of intensive instruction. The boy emerged, transformed, into a skilled and capable young man, and returned to reintegrate his learning into his community. The young boy is like our language, endangered to the point of near-death by colonization, and in need of Grizzly's help. Adult language learners similarly need to be immersed in intensive instruction for two years, removed from our usual distractions, under the tutelage of language experts like the Grizzly-mother and her cubs, and a similar network of support to re-integrate our language back into our homes and communities (Johnson 2012). For adult Indigenous language learners some of our Grizzly Bears, or guides, will be advanced second-language acquisition (SLA) methods, teachers, curriculum and techniques. My capsíw's and I were fortunate to have the assistance of our own Grizzlies, Sʔamtícʷaʔ, Chris Parkin and TPCLA's curriculum, including exposure to cutting-edge second-language learning and assessment techniques. Like the boy, we emerged with skills and an openness to new techniques that we will, with support, be able to share with our communities.

According to our captíkʷł and sqəlxʷcawt we each have a role and responsibility to act on our individual gifts and share our knowledge with community. There are at least three instances of tmixʷ, *animal beings*, whose cawt, *way*, or *role and responsibility*, demonstrate the powerful role of individuals and their responsibility to share their song, sometimes with the ability to bring another being back to life (Johnson 2012). Our captíkʷł include many stories of Coyote being admonished to follow his own cawt and not copy others' ways—a powerful message for Indigenous language learners and activists to develop our own learning methods. These stories give me courage to share what I have learned with the academy and with community.

Our ultimate role and responsibility as Syilx adults is to learn our languages in order to transmit them to children. Our transformation must be guided by our Grizzlies: Nʔsyilxen learning phases, messages embedded in our language and our sqəlxʷcawt, *as well as* advanced second-language acquisition methods and sequenced curriculum. As adult Indigenous second-language learners and revitalizers, we need to develop a blended methodology: we need to gather together our Grizzly bears and resources (Elders, language experts and curriculum), utilize second-language acquisition techniques, write sequenced curriculum, commit hundreds of hours to a transformative in-community process, and continually assess our progress as well as our methods.

According to sq̄lx^wcawt our personal narratives, set in our particular communities, take primacy over outside methodological generalizations (Jack 2010). Our films document our transformation in Grizzly's den in our own words, from our initial stumbling efforts as q^wlq^wlti[?]st, *first speech*, speakers to n[?]l̄q^wcin, *clear speech*, (or roughly from beginner to intermediate, as discussed below). Our films are entirely in N[?]syilxcn, a choice reflecting our commitment to the power of immersion and the courage to break the silence imposed by generations of colonization. The next two sections briefly introduce the first two films, *Goldilocks I* and *Goldilocks II*, and then allow our N[?]syilxcn narrative to speak for itself.

4. GOLDILOCKS I: CHOPAKA IMMERSION HOUSE. Our first film, *Goldilocks I: Chopaka Immersion House*, provides an introduction to the capsíw's, our house, and began a gathering process for our preliminary language assessment, a telling of the Goldilocks story, entirely in N[?]syilxcn. The four-minute film was shot in January and February 2011. *Goldilocks I* is a proud achievement for us. It demonstrates our courage to begin to speak and to commit ourselves to an intensive learning program.



FIGURE 1. Scene from *Goldilocks I*. Left to right: Prasát, Sta[?]q^wálqs, C[?]ərtups, S[?]ímla[?]x^w. <http://youtu.be/KVj3vpCf6JE>

The film begins with personal introductions, an important part of our sq̄lx^wcawt. Each of the five capsíw's introduces herself: Prasát, S[?]ímla[?]x^w, C[?]ərtups, X^wnamx^wnam, and Sta[?]q^wálqs. Next, four capsíw's are seen and heard in our first N[?]syilxcn conversation around the kitchen table. The next three scenes show Prasát quietly studying, the capsíw's playing the card game, *Uno*, with S[?]amtíc[?]a[?], and Sta[?]q^wálqs chopping kindling outside. In the final two minutes of the film we tell the Goldilocks story in our own

words, at our own language levels. Narratives from our first immersion conversation and our telling of the Goldilocks story are shared below.

4.1 OUR FIRST IMMERSION CONVERSATION. The kitchen table scene is subtitled “First immersion conversation” (01:20). We had turned off English that morning. Our conversational abilities were extremely limited but I clearly remember the thrill in the room when we began our transformative journey, exploring our conversational boundaries for the first time. Our narrative humbly illustrates our very basic speech levels.

S?ímla?x^w: (1:20) ya?yá?ǵa??

Sta?q^wálqs: yir.

S?ímla?x^w: oh, yir!

Prasát: yir. ki.

Sta?q^wálqs: yir. kəkniya? (gestures spinning, hand-to-ear, i.e. listening to CD).

S?ímla?x^w: acmistín. anwí n’- . . . ? (looks at Prasát, gestures singing).

Prasát: lut tə *incá* ñk^wnim . . . (points at Sta?q^wálqs) (1:30).

Translation:

S?ímla?x^w: (1:20) watch something (like television)?

Sta?q^wálqs: circle.

S?ímla?x^w: oh, circle!

Prasát: circle. yes.

Sta?q^wálqs: circle. listen.

S?ímla?x^w: I know [understand]. you s- . . . ?

Prasát: not *me* sing (1:30).

4.2 GOLDILOCKS I NARRATIVE. For our language assessment, we chose the Goldilocks story because it was a simple, familiar story to us. None of us had studied or practiced it, and we felt it would therefore demonstrate our ability to storytell, without practice.⁷ We each told the story in five minutes or less, but for brevity and storytelling style I spliced brief narrative segments, choosing sentences illustrative of our language levels. In this way, the film shows us taking turns telling a two-minute narrative and the story ends about half way through, after the scene with the porridge. The narrative is provided below, complete with errors. I indicate errors by providing square brackets [] around what we were attempting to say.

S?ímla?x^w: (01:57) kn kscúntma?x i? captík^wǵ *Goldilocks and the three Bears*. way ǵsápi?, naqs sǵǵǵǵalt, knaqs xíxu?tm x^wu·y iklí·? kǵ citx^ws . . . s-s-s- [skm̄xist] . . .

Prasát: (02:22) tka?tka?ǵís i? skm̄xist na?ǵ k^wil xi- . . . xíxu?tm.

Sta?q^wálqs: (02:30) axá?! . . . citx^w! . . . mmmm, citx^w. ta?lí ilx^wt. ta?lí ayx^wt.

⁷ For those who need a Goldilocks refresher: A little blonde-haired girl is walking in the forest. She is hungry and tired and enters a house, not realizing three bears live there. She finds three bowls of porridge, one of which she eats; three chairs, one of which she breaks; and three beds, in one of which she sleeps. The bears return home to find porridge eaten, chair broken, girl sleeping, and chase her off.

ǰ^wnámǰ^wnam: (02:42) i? sǰkǰ?iǰnǰtn kǰ ka?ǰis sǰkǰkǰp. i? kǰkǰp kǰ sǰpǰq^witk^w. c?ix sǰpǰq^witk^w. naqs kǰ c?ix sǰpǰq^witk^w, naqs kǰ ca?ǰ sǰpǰq^witk^w, uǰ naqs . . . ǰi ǰast sǰpǰq^witk^w.

C'ǰtups: (03:07) xǰxu?tm ǰilstn . . . ǰilsts [ǰilsts] sǰp . . . sǰpǰq^witk^w. hmmm . . .

Prasát: (03:21) uh, swit i? . . . swit i? iǰn i? stix^w ?

C'ǰtups: (03:28) ǰ- . . . [ǰilsts]. mmm . . . (ǰayǰcǰts, uǰ nix^w q^wásqi ǰayǰcǰts) (03:49). (Total narrative 1 min. 52 sec.)

Translation:

S?ǰmla?x^w: I will say [tell] the story *Goldilocks and the three Bears*. Ok, long ago, one day, one little girl went . . . far (*went* and *far* are elongated in mock storytelling style) to the house of b- . . . b- . . . [bear] (snaps fingers, unable to remember *bear*).

Prasát: three bear [s] and red [blond-haired] little girl.

Sta?q^wálqs: This! . . . (points at something) House! . . . mmm, (sniffing). House. Very hungry (pats stomach). Very tired (motions walking towards house).

ǰ^wnámǰ^wnam: The table had three bowls. The bowls had porridge. Hot porridge. One had hot porridge, one had cool porridge, and one . . . just right porridge.

C'ǰtups: Little girl . . . I ate . . . she ate . . . p- . . . porridge. hmmm . . . (pauses, thinking).

Prasát: uh, who . . . who . . . ate the stew [porridge]?

C'ǰtups: a- . . . [ate] (pauses) mmm . . . (laughs, unable to complete story).

(Q^wásqi (Blue Jay) laughs audibly in the forest behind C'ǰtups as the credits run.)

Until I showed the film in community I did not know that q^wásqi's vocalizations indicated laughter. Elders laughed along with q^wásqi, sharing the humor and humility in our first storytelling.

5. GOLDILOCKS II: CHOPAKA IMMERSION HOUSE. In our second film, *Goldilocks II: Chopaka Immersion House* we re-told the Goldilocks story five months later with great improvement. Our storytelling had more detail, vocabulary and grammar elements, and we were all able to complete the story, even adding personal storytelling embellishments, even though we had not practiced or told the story since the original telling.

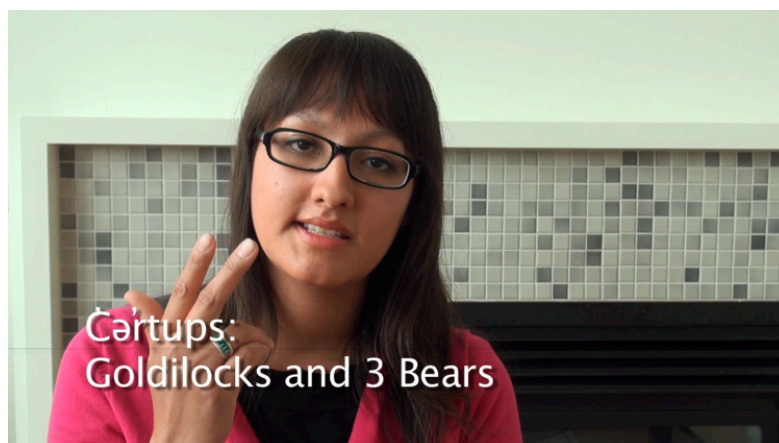


FIGURE 2. Scene from *Goldilocks II*. http://youtube.be/3DxQb_LLrw

We each told the Goldilocks story in approximately five minutes but for brevity and storytelling style I spliced narrative segments approximately one- to two-minutes long to create a seven-minute story. Our *Goldilocks II* narrative is provided below.

5.1 GOLDBLOCKS II NARRATIVE:

C'ærtups: (00:10) way̯ tə tkʷriʔqn naʔt̪ tkaʔkaʔʰis skm̩xist. ɔ̯saʔpí tkʷriʔqn xʷaʔxʷist̪ l̩ ɛ̯al̩. tkʷriʔqn ɛkics tkaʔkaʔʰis . . . citxʷ. tkaʔkaʔʰis skm̩xist xʷuy̯ ɪ̯ citxʷ. tkʷriʔqn kʰʔipnt—klʔipnt—kʰʔipnt [kʰnkʷʰips] . . . (ʕay̯ncút) . . . xʷuy̯ kʰl̩ sn̩kʷəl̩ncutn.

Prasát: (01:10) ɛmay ɛqʷliw̩m tə síyaʔ, lut acmistím. uʔ ɪxiʔ iʔ xíxuʔtm wiks iʔ tkaʔkaʔʰis skm̩xist citxʷ. uʔ uh, iʔ xíxuʔtm taʔlí ʔilxʷt̪ uʔ um, ɛmay m̩l̩milt̪ iʔ sq̯ilxʷ uʔ citxʷ. uʔ lut kn̩ t̩a kʰ sk̩- . . . sk̩k̩m̩xist, uʔ lut kn̩ t̩a kʰ tum̩, mist̩m, uʔ iʔ ɛɔ̯málaʔs. uʔ iʔ xíxuʔtm taʔlí ʔilxʷt̪ uʔ uh, wiks iʔ ɪh̩n, uʔ x̩minks ɪh̩n. uʔ iʔ xíxuʔtm naq̯s ɪh̩n iʔ oh, n̩iptms! umm . . . (Sʔímlaʔxʷ: sn̩p̩qʷitkʷ). sn̩p̩qʷitkʷ, sn̩p̩qʷitkʷ! uʔ iʔ itn . . . ɪh̩n, taʔlí ɛix̩ɛxt̪ uʔ lut t̩ə ʔast, uʔ uh, iʔ ʔasíl sn̩p̩qʷitkʷ lut t̩ə ʔast, uʔ kʰit. uʔ uh, iʔ—iʔ—iʔ . . . kaʔʰis sn̩p̩qʷitkʷ ti put! uʔ iʔ xi—xi—xíxuʔtm ɛit̪ yaʔyáʔt̪ iʔ sn̩p̩qʷitkʷ. uʔ iʔ xíxuʔtm wiks iʔ sn̩k̩mutn. uʔ mut̪ iʔ naq̯s sn̩k̩mutn, sílxʷaʔ sn̩k̩mutn, lut t̩ə ʔast. uʔ ʔasíl sn̩k̩mutn um, uʔ uh . . . lut t̩ə ʔast. uʔ kaʔʰis sn̩k̩mutn, t̩i put! uʔ maʔwt̪ iʔ sn̩k̩mutn. uʔ iʔ xíxuʔtm taʔlí ayxʷt̪. uʔ . . .

Sʔímlaʔxʷ: (03:16) ʎaʔʎaʔám sn̩pulxtn. uʔ l̩ iʔ sn̩pulxtn kaʔʰis sn̩t̩qtn. wiks iʔ sn̩t̩qtn. naq̯s iʔ sn̩t̩qtn miyáʔ t̩stast. ʔasíl iʔ sn̩t̩qtn miyáʔ . . . oh, n̩iptmn iʔ sʔums. lut t̩ə ʔast. uʔ kaʔʰis sn̩t̩qtn t̩i ʔast. uʔ pulx tkʷriʔqn uʔ ʔitx. um, cyʔap̩lx̩ tkaʔkaʔʰis iʔ sk̩k̩m̩xist l̩ citxʷs̩lx̩. uʔ wiks iʔ sn̩ɪh̩tn. uʔ iʔ t̩t̩w̩t̪ sk̩k̩m̩xist cus, swit̪ iʔ ʔi̯s̩ is̩n̩p̩qʷitkʷ? mat̪ swit̪ ʔi̯s̩ is̩n̩p̩qʷitkʷ uʔ wiʔs̩ is̩n̩p̩qʷitkʷ!

ǻʷnámǻʷnam: (04:29) oh, n̩kx̩n̩á, kʷʎax̩ yaʔyáʔt̪ swit̪. swit̪ aláʔ? uʔ, hmmm . . . uʔ, iʔ kʷl̩ʔilt̪ [sk̩k̩m̩xist] wiks iʔ sn̩k̩mutns. n̩kx̩n̩á! in̩m̩s̩ ʔast sn̩k̩mutn! swit̪ maʔs̩ is̩n̩k̩m̩t̩n? uʔ ɛqʷaqʷ. uʔ, oh, in̩xm̩nk̩ kakíc—kakíc swit̪ mut̪ l̩

isnkłmutn. uł ʕaymtwılx i? skñxist. *hmm*, emay ı i? npulxtn—i? ñpulxtntöt. uł x^wuy—x^wuy?iəlx kl i? ñpulxtnsəlx. uł i? tumtm i? skñxist cus, mmm, mat swit ı isñpulxtn. ʕəçnt! nikxəná. uł i? ʕxap skñxist cus, nikxəná, mat swit ı isñłqutn. kaķín? uł i? k^wıilt [skəkñxist] skñxist cq^waq^w, nikxəná! ʕəçnt ı isñłqutn, i? . . . stim ixí?? i? sqıl^w ı isñłqútn, xıxu?tm. uł yaçt i? skñxist ʕaymt. uł tk^wri?qn . . . qıft, uł nxił, a[·] skñxist! nikxəna, húma?! (ʕayñçút). łətpmñcut, uł yçalt ı i? citx^wsəlx. uł ilí? way. lut t acmistín. lut inçmínk i? skñxist ıts i? tk^wri?qn. (ʕayñçút).

C’əřtups: (6:20) mmm . . . tka?ka?ńis i? skñxist s?ıfns i? tk^wri?qn. way ıxí? put.

S?ımla?x^w: (6:30) kłkilsəlx i? tk^wri?qn. u[·]ı [kn] ntıls, ?ıfəsəlx i? tk^wri?qn. uł way.

Prasát: (6:39) qicəlx uł qicəlx kl cla?tiws! uł way ıxí? (ʕayncut) (6:48).

(Total narrative 6 min. 38 sec.).

Translation:

C’əřtups: Ok, Goldilocks and three bears. Long ago, Goldilocks walked in [the] forest. Goldilocks arrived [at] three person[’s] house. Three bears, he goes, from house. Goldilocks op-, op-, (laughs, unable to find word *opened the door*) . . . went to [the] kitchen.

Prasát: Maybe she was picking saskatoon berries, we don’t know. The little girl saw the three bears[’s] house. And, the little girl was very hungry, and maybe visit the people[’s] house. And I don’t have [there aren’t any] bears, mother, father, children. The little girl was very hungry and saw the eat [food] and wanted food. And the little girl, one, [she] ate the . . . oh she forgets [I forget]! um. . . (S?ımla?x^w: porridge). Oh, porridge, porridge! And food [she ate] the porridge, very hot, not good. And the two [second] porridge not good, cold. The three [third] porridge was just right. And the little girl ate all the porridge. The little girl saw the chair. She sat in one, a big chair, and it wasn’t good. And two chair, wasn’t good. And three chair, was just right. She broke the chair, and the little girl was very tired.

S?ımla?x^w: She looked for [a] bedroom. In the bedroom were three beds. She saw the beds. The one [first] bed, too hard. The two [second] bed . . . too . . . oh, I forget the word. Not good. The three [third] bed was . . . just right. Goldilocks went to bed and slept. The three bears arrived in [at] their house. He saw the kitchen table and the little boy bear said, “Who ate my porridge? Somebody ate my porridge and finished it!”

Ā^wnámĀ^wnam: Nikxena, *gosh*. Everyone was surprised. “Who is here?” The [cub] saw his chair. “Nikxena. My favorite chair! Who broke my chair?” He cried, “Oh, I want to find whoever sat on my chair.” The bear[s] got angrier. “Hmm, maybe in our bedroom.” And they go—they went to their bedroom, and the mother bear said, “Somebody was here in the bedroom. Look! Nikxena!” And the elder bear said, “Nikxena, somebody was in *my* bed. Where is he?” And the [cub] cried, “Nikxena, look in my bed! . . . What is it? A person is in my bed. A little girl.” The bears were angry. And Goldilocks . . . woke up. She was afraid. “Nikxena! Bear! Excuse me!” (laughing). She jumped up and ran off from their house. . . That’s it (laughing). I don’t know. I don’t like [to

say] the bear ate Goldilocks.

C'óftups: The three bears ate Goldilocks. And . . . that's it.

Sʔimlaʔxʷ: They chased Goldilocks, and . . . [I] think they ate Goldilocks.
That's it.

Prasát: She ran and ran to the valley. And that's it (laughing).

6. N'SYILXCN ACQUISITION PHASES AND ASSESSMENT. Our speech had improved between *Goldilocks I* and *Goldilocks II*, but by how much? I wondered if there were words to discuss our progress, *in the language*. I had read that second languages are naturally acquired in phases, referred to as the silent (comprehension) phase, early production, speech emergence, intermediate and advanced, by Krashen & Terrell (1988). I overheard Elders remark that a child or adult learner had achieved what sounded (to me) like a language phase: k'lp'x'wínaʔ, *holes cut in the ears*, or comprehension phase. In her filmed interview, Sʔamtic'aʔ pronounced us n'ʔəq'wcin, *clear speakers*—the first time I had heard that word. This spurred me to ask her and other Elders how to express N'syilxcn phases of language learning. I found through conversation with three Elders that there are many N'syilxcn words to indicate the entire range of language acquisition stages, from the initial comprehension stage to 'true' speech. I noted four distinct N'syilxcn acquisition phases, which I describe, though I realize there may be many more. I have heard each term applied to learners by at least two Elders, but please accept that my learning is preliminary and ongoing, and that N'syilxcn is spoken differently by different Elders. The terms are applied subjectively, based on the Elder's knowledge of language acquisition. The four N'syilxcn phases I have so far identified are k'lp'x'wínaʔ, *holes cut in the ears* or comprehension phase, q'wl'qwl'tiʔst, *first speech*, n'ʔəq'wcin, *clear speech*, and n'tʰcin, *straightened, or true speech*, reproduced in the table below and discussed further in Johnson 2012 and my dissertation (Johnson 2013).

k'lp'x'wínaʔ	holes cut in the ears, when a person begins to comprehend language; first stage of N'syilxcn acquisition
qwl'qwl'tiʔst	first speech, when words are formed, similar to a child's speech, short utterances; second stage of N'syilxcn acquisition
n'ʔəq'wcin	starting to be heard, make a noise, become more clear voiced, audible, from ʰiqw, plain to see; third stage of N'syilxcn acquisition
n'tʰcin	straightened or true speech, when speech contains few errors and is like the Elders; final stage of N'syilxcn acquisition

TABLE 1. N'syilxcn acquisition stages

As well as N'syilxcn phases of learning, I became interested in language assessment, a related yet distinct process that can unpack the value and efficacy of a particular learning program. Indigenous language assessment has been described as a three-stage process similar to gathering firewood, building a fire, and evaluating the flames, based on expert knowledge of tree species, humidity of wood, amount of pitch, and so on (Miller 2004:14, speaking of Secwepemtsin Interior Salish assessments). In language

assessment these three stages are: gathering language information; building an assessment strategy; and finally applying the assessment strategy to the information (Miller 2004:14). I include an extra stage, prior to evaluation, sharing the knowledge in community, to *enjoy the flames*. My filmed narrative assessment process followed a similar pattern: collecting raw footage and interview narratives was a gathering process; the editing process was similar to building the fire; viewing the films in community was similar to enjoying the flames (in sharing our narratives on YouTube and in this writing we are enjoying the flames with a broader audience); and finally evaluating the narrative based on N'syilxcn and international language benchmarks is the evaluation of the flames. In the following sections I evaluate the flames, first according to N'syilxcn language acquisition stages and then based on international assessment benchmarks.

7. GOLDILOCKS I. *Goldilocks I* demonstrates our basic q^wlq^wlti?st speech level and our slightly varying language abilities in our first month.

Prasát, C'örtups, Sta?q^wálqs and I were q^wlq^wlti?st, struggling to make our first sounds. We still showed frequent signs of k'lp'x^wína?, often unable to find our voices and resorting to silence. X^wnámx^wnam was n'łəq^wcin when we moved into the house, though she was shy and quiet and often resorted to the silences employed by k'lp'x^wína? and q^wlq^wlti?st speakers. She, like many N'syilxcn learners, demonstrated the Syilx value of quietness (Cardinal & Armstrong 1991:90); she was very respectful and listened more than she spoke.

As the kitchen table conversation demonstrates, we succeeded in creating a space where we felt safe enough to overcome our learner's shyness and fear of making mistakes and find our first voices. In the scene, Prasát, Sta?q^wálqs and I conversed at a q^wlq^wlti?st level while C'örtups silently looked on. Like all beginners (a second-language assessment term defined below) we had difficulty understanding each other, spoke in one- or two-word sentences, had almost no use of grammar and truly limited vocabularies. We conveyed through one-word sentences and gestures that we were talking about a CD of traditional songs, rather than a film. I tried to ask Prasát if she was the singer on the CD, but was only able to articulate a single word “anwí”, *you*, and the sound “n” from “n'k^wnim”, *sing*, and make a gesture as though singing. I couldn't remember the word n'k^wnim from our N'syilxcn 1 vocabulary (in second-language acquisition terms, n'k^wnim was in my *comprehension* vocabulary and not yet in my *productive* vocabulary) and hoped Prasát would remember it. Sharing a common vocabulary from TP-CLA's level-one curriculum was a great advantage to us as incipient conversationalists. Prasát said the word (thus assisting its transition from my comprehension to productive vocabulary) and answered in the negative that no, she was not the singer on the CD in a three-word sentence, “lut *incá* n'k^wnims”, *not me sings*. None of us had used person markers to conjugate the verb (finding it much harder to do so in real life than in a grammar exercise), and only one of us had actually remembered the verb *sing* at all. At this point, unable to employ further words, one of us ran to get the CD.

We demonstrated slightly higher-level abilities in monologue (our personal narratives and Goldilocks storytelling) than in our group conversation at the kitchen table. Our Goldilocks narratives demonstrate q^wlq^wlti?st and n'łəq^wcin speech. Sta?q^wálqs and C'örtups' narratives were q^wlq^wlti?st—employing short sentences of one or two words.

They both trailed off into silence and laughter, unable to complete the story. Staʔqʷálqs turned out to be gifted at storytelling with non-verbal gestures and sounds. Prasát and I storytold at very basic nʔəqʷcin levels, speaking in longer, audible sentences and completing the story, though with very simple vocabularies, incomplete grammar, and no details, descriptions, or embellishments. ǰʷnámǰʷnam’s storytelling was already fully nʔəqʷcin—her narrative was quite complete, though it was simple and her voice was quiet. Over five months in the house she gained confidence and was a stronger storyteller in the second telling.

8. GOLDILOCKS II. In the five months between *Goldilocks I* and *II* we transformed from qʷlqʷltiʔst to nʔəqʷcin—a vast transformation. After five months in the immersion house Sʔamtic’aʔ proudly pronounced all of us nʔəqʷcin, which literally means *clear voiced*. The clarity indicates several things—we had overcome our shyness and fear, gained confidence and become clearly audible. Each of us now told the story from beginning to end with more fluid storytelling, greater vocabulary, and much improved grammar and pronunciation. C’ərʔtups showed a remarkable improvement from not being able to complete the story to telling the story from beginning to end with increased use of grammar, details, and humor. Staʔqʷálqs was unavailable for the final interview but would also have demonstrated remarkable improvement—Sʔamtic’aʔ noted that Staʔqʷálqs was also nʔəqʷcin. ǰʷnámǰʷnam’s transformation was remarkable—in her narrative she became an animated, colourful storyteller with gestures, inflection and confidence in her voice—truly nʔəqʷcin.

One very telling comparison is the sheer *amount* of language used in the second film compared to the first. There is a great deal more language used than in the first Goldilocks telling. We also added playful Syilx-style storytelling elements the second time around. The little girl may have been out “*picking saskatoon berries, we don’t know*” (Prasát 01:10). Saskatoon berries are one of our Four Sacred Foods, plentiful in Syilx territory, and are often mentioned in Syilx captíkʷł (story). C’ərʔtups and I added Syilx-style endings where the bears ate the little girl, also reminiscent of stories from captíkʷł: “tkaʔkaʔłis iʔ skmʔxist sʔilns iʔ tkʷriʔqn. wayʔ ixiʔ put”, [*the*] *three bears ate Goldilocks. And that’s it* (C’ərʔtups 06:29).

We still made frequent grammatical and vocabulary errors and had limited ability to communicate but we were more clearly comprehensible to each other and other listeners, like our Elder. Language tasks such as these are described by second-language assessment benchmarks, and in the next section I attempt to untangle the web of second-language assessment in Indigenous contexts and apply international second-language assessment benchmarks to our narratives.

9. INDIGENOUS SECOND-LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKS. Language assessment is seldom employed or discussed in Indigenous Language programs (Miller 2004, Peter et al. 2003, Haynes *et al.* 2010), possibly due to mistrust and fear of negative evaluations and political consequences (Peter et al. 2003:7, Peter & Hirata-Edds 2006). I found only two published situations where an assessment strategy was actually applied to an Indigenous language program. Cherokee teachers in schools reported that

they found assessment useful after an initial period of doubt (Peter et al. 2003:7, Peter & Hirata-Edds 2006). The five-benchmark Kaiaka Reo assessment model was tested on Māori students from years one through eight and recommended that it be adopted at a national level (Edmonds et al. 2013).

Indigenous language programs sometimes judge their success by the creation of proficient speakers, or by children raised in the language. Viewed through this lens, most Indigenous language programs have been failures, as they have not produced new speakers (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998, Fishman 1993, Parkin 2012). Hawai‘i has produced several hundred new speakers and many children are being raised in the language (Gionson 2009), however Hawaiian is much easier to learn than the ‘mainland’ Indigenous languages, which require upwards of 1,000 hours. It is difficult to create advanced speakers even for non-Indigenous university language programs. Most university second-language programs create no higher than intermediate speakers (Rifkin 2003, Rifkin et al. 2005:3), attributed to the fact that four full years of university instruction typically adds up to only 420 hours which falls far short of the 1,000 required for ‘difficult’ languages (Rifkin 2003:585). Researchers estimate 1,000 hours to achieve at least mid-intermediate levels, for languages quite different from English (Rifkin 2003:585, Jackson & Kaplan 2001, Johnson 2013, McIvor 2012:53).

I did not set out on the path of Indigenous language assessment; I set out as a language learner in search of successful learning strategies, which I found through TPCLA curriculum. Like other Indigenous teachers and learners, I was afraid at first to broach this topic, fearing that assessment was a non-traditional activity (Peter et al. 2003), or that I was falling into the trap of applying the tools of the colonizers (Smith 2003). At first, I questioned whether assessing our language ability might reflect a damaging, judgmental, or invasive process. After much reflection, I came to accept that assessments are one of several second-language acquisition techniques that are critical to the success of Indigenous language programs—and that not to use them would be engaging in my own “politic of distraction” (Smith 2003:2)—succumbing to doubt and confusion, rather than action.

Graham Hingangaroa Smith voices the concern that as Indigenous academics, labeling and engaging in uncritical science can serve to reproduce our own oppression, and recreate oppressive structures (Smith 2000:215). Smith challenges us to be proactive, rather than reactive, and develop Indigenous praxis with Indigenous cultural values. Graham Smith’s role in proactive engagement started in 1982, when the Māori people decided to step outside the colonial structures and form language nests, which have gone on to include hundreds of children (2000). Māori and Hawaiian language efforts have been an inspiration to Canadian Indigenous language revitalization (McIvor 2005:27). Initially, Māori immersion efforts, as well as Hawaiian programs, were inspired by and based on Canada’s successful French immersion programs (McIvor 2005:27, Warner 1999:75); these programs are arguably the most successful programs in heritage language teaching (Krashen 1984, Hammerly 1987). Upon further research, I found that Canadian French immersion programs employ cutting-edge language assessment techniques, which are highly detailed and fully described (CLB 2006, Pawlikowska-Smith 2000). The Māori have created their own language assessment benchmarks, however they are unpublished and unavailable for review (Haynes et al. 2010).

The goal of Indigenous language revitalization is the creation of a generation of proficient speakers who will then bring their languages back to their homes and communities. In the initial phases of language revitalization, at our levels of critical endangerment, our learning methods will necessarily be ‘artificial’ classroom-based learning, following second-language principles (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998:79, McIvor 2005:100). As learners progress, their curriculum must become more complex and challenging, as will their assessment strategies. With this in mind, it is vital to employ regular assessment with definable proficiency stages to our learners as a proactive measure that will safeguard us against reproducing unsuccessful programs. Assessment and evaluation is increasingly recognized as critical to the success of Indigenous language programs in our changed colonial context of advanced language loss (Haynes et al. 2003, Miller 2004, Peter et al. 2003, NILI 2012), and I believe filmed assessments can honor our voices and provide valuable learner motivation—a critical factor in second-language learning (Asher 2009, Dornyei 2003, Ellis 1997, Richards & Maracle 2002).

N’syilxcn and many other Indigenous languages do not yet have a method to assess our learning on an honest continuum from zero to advanced and it is common to employ indefinable terms like speaker, semi-speaker, semi-fluent and fluent. Arguments about the definition of *fluency* are well documented in second-language literature (Lennon 1990, Rifkin 2003). I decided as a learner to drop the indefinable goal of ‘fluent’ in favor of a clearly definable goal of advanced proficiency.

Confusion often exists, in Indigenous language programs, between the goals of language transmission and cultural transmission (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998). Indigenous approaches commonly stress the importance of socio-cultural content rather than language content (Haynes et al. 2010). Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer warn against the common tendency to confuse language transmission with cultural transmission (1998). Introducing complex cultural content too early reduces the amount of hours spent in focused language instruction and increases the tendency to switch to English (Richards & Maracle 2002:380). Indigenous instructors express frustration in programs where instruction switches to English or continues to rely on unsuccessful methods (Richards & Maracle 2002, Underwood 2009:3). It is critically important for Indigenous languages to adopt successful second-language acquisition methods, train teachers in these methods (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer 1998; McIvor 2005, 2012), and maintain full immersion.

Indigenous language programs, as reviewed by Haynes et al. (2010), appear (in my opinion) heavily weighted towards beginner testing functions. The Northwest Indian Language Institute’s Native Language Proficiency Benchmark (NILI 2012) also appears to be strongly weighted towards beginner, and conflates the intermediate and advanced levels; however, it incorporates excellent task-based cultural language functions such as giving speeches in the longhouse and praying, at advanced levels. I worry that weighting Indigenous assessments towards beginner will contribute to the tendency for efforts to plateau at a beginner level (Johnson 2012). Indigenous language learners need to adopt an assessment that describes the entire range of speech, including fully proficient speech.

There are several non-Indigenous second-language assessment scales with detailed descriptions of the entire speech range from beginner to advanced (and beyond), including the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) (2006, Pawlikowska-Smith 2000), the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2012), and the Com-

mon European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001). Each assessment strategy names and describes language benchmarks, generally broken into beginner, intermediate, and advanced, and further subdivided into either twelve (CLB) or nine (ACTFL) sub-levels. The CLB system was designed to create a common categorization system for Canadians (CLB 2006, Pawlikowska-Smith 2000). The CLB descriptions are very thorough at each level and noteworthy in that they employ real-world *task-based* proficiency descriptions such as, “ask about and tell time,” and “summarize a lecture,” to ensure that proficiency is tested, rather than non-linguistic skills (Pawlikowska-Smith 2000:viii). The ACTFL benchmarks are widely accepted in North America, and have been informally adopted by a handful of North American Indigenous groups (Haynes et al. 2010). In a comparison of international assessments by Vandergrift (2006), CLB categories correspond more closely to the European (CEFR) rating system than the ACTFL, being much more complete in the advanced levels than ACTFL. Interestingly, CLB benchmark 12 goes so far as to include a very honest real-world challenge: the ability to respond appropriately to simulated sarcasm and hostility in the workplace or academia (CLB 2006:46).

Jack Miller responded to a need identified by First Nations teachers to assess progress and achievement and waded through several assessment strategies, including the CLB and ACTFL (Miller 2004). Miller combined CLB and ACTFL scales and adapted them to First Nations contexts to develop culturally appropriate *Indigenous Language Proficiency Benchmarks* specifically for Indigenous and Interior Salish languages, by partnering with Interior Salish teachers near Kamloops, BC. He created nine-tiered descriptive benchmarks roughly equivalent to CLB and ACTFL. He provides benchmark checklists in an excellent table at the end of his EdD thesis (2004:163–165). Miller’s scale is useful though simplified from the originals and I often refer to the more detailed CLB and ACTFL sources he drew from. Because of its task-based descriptions and strength in describing advanced levels, the CLB is my favored assessment strategy for Indigenous language application, used in combination with Miller and ACTFL.

For simplicity’s sake, I merge CLB, ACTFL, and Miller’s classifications into Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced, divided into low-, mid-, and high- subcategories, rather than their complex numbering and naming systems. Similarly to Jack Miller and ACTFL, I conflate CLB’s twelve categories into nine benchmarks (I conflate their second and third of four tiers into *mid-*). I blend assessment strategies with my understanding of N’syilxcn acquisition stages. I refer to these merged benchmarks in the table below and in the next section in reference to our N’syilxcn narrative.

Assessment Benchmarks	N’syilxcn acquisition stages (approximate and preliminary)
Beginner -low	qwl’qwl’ti?st
-mid	k’lpxwina?
-high	
Intermediate -low	n’lɔqwcin
-mid	

	-high	
Advanced	-low	n'tłcin
	-mid	
	-high	

TABLE 2. Assessment Benchmarks and N'syilxcn Acquisition Stages

Summarized simply: *beginner* speakers can sustain simple question and answer exchanges including yes/no and one-or two-word sentences; *intermediate* speakers can sustain informal conversations on concrete topics, recite simple stories and legends and hold informal meetings; and *advanced* speakers can participate effectively in discussion on a broad variety of topics, including presentations, debates, lectures, and rapid shifts between languages (CLB 2006, Miller 2004:132–135).

I need to point out in the following assessment of our filmed narratives I refer only to speaking ability, though there are four distinct language-learning categories: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (ACTFL 2012, CLB 2006, Miller 2004). I did not assess our listening, reading, or writing abilities. There is also a distinction between speaking in monologue and back-and-forth conversing, which is regarded as more difficult. Other than the kitchen table scene, I refer mainly to monologue speaking ability. It bears mentioning that we spoke better in a monologue than conversing, and our speaking abilities were considerably higher than our reading and writing abilities, which remained at beginner throughout. Our listening abilities varied depending on how much exposure we had had to the language. In the future we need to develop nqilx^wcn assessments for speaking, listening, reading, and writing, *in* nqilx^wcn.

10. SECOND-LANGUAGE SPEAKING ASSESSMENT OF GOLDILOCKS I AND II. In *Goldilocks I* our narratives reflect simple mid-beginner speech, with very few details or embellishments. We use short sentences and make many errors that would make it difficult for an Elder to understand us. These traits are typical of low- to mid-beginner speech levels. Mid-beginner speakers can sustain simple question and answer exchanges though often with very short responses and only in areas they are familiar with (Miller 2004). Mid-beginner speakers are extremely difficult to understand, even by the most ‘sympathetic listeners’ (ACTFL 2012:9).

Our first immersion conversation demonstrates classic mid-beginner speech: “little control of basic grammar structures and tenses, and context strongly supports the utterance (e.g., by gestures, objects or location)” (CLB 2006:8). Mid-beginner speakers communicate “minimally and with difficulty,” responding with two- or three-word incomplete sentences, pauses, hesitations, and lack of vocabulary (ACTFL 2012:9), evidenced in our kitchen table discussion as well as our Goldilocks narrative. Mid-beginner speakers often resort to repetition or silence, as evidenced by one of us running off to get the CD rather than describe it. Silence played a role in our Goldilocks I storytelling, for example when we were unable to complete the story while Blue Jays laughed in the background.

We displayed slightly higher speech skills in our Goldilocks monologues than our group conversation, demonstrating some high-beginner speech traits. High-beginner

speakers, like mid-beginner speakers, have short, hesitant, present-tense, incomplete, inaccurate sentences, however if they are comfortable with their topic they can briefly appear ‘surprisingly’ proficient and respond in ‘intelligible sentences,’ though they are not “able to sustain sentence level discourse” (ACTFL 2012:9). For the most part we were at a low- to mid- beginner level. High-beginner level speakers can describe things and take part in simple routine conversations (Miller 2004), clearly not yet evident in our kitchen table conversation. *ǂwámǂwám* was not present for the kitchen table conversation, but she would likely have conversed at a high-beginner level (though probably very quietly).

Our transformation from *q^wlq^wItist* in *Goldilocks I* to *n’lǂq^wcin* in *Goldilocks II* roughly corresponds to a shift from mid-beginner to low-intermediate—a remarkable achievement in five months. In *Goldilocks II* we still made frequent errors but our narratives were more complete and comprehensible. Becoming intelligible to Elders is a hurdle the learner will surmount just before or after mid-intermediate, according to Miller (2004), CLB, and ACTFL benchmarks. When a learner reaches mid-intermediate, “grammar and pronunciation errors are still frequent, but rarely impede communication” (Miller 2004:164). When learners pass mid-intermediate their intelligibility grows from ‘understood with great difficulty’ to ‘generally understood’ by ‘sympathetic’ listeners (ACTFL 2012:9). According to CLB, mid-intermediate speakers make frequent grammar and pronunciation errors, self-corrections and rephrasing, but their errors ‘rarely impede communication’ (Pawlikowska-Smith 2000:54), a benchmark we had not yet passed.

In *Goldilocks II* we were able to narrate the entire story. Miller defines intermediate speaking as including the ability recite simple stories and legends (Miller 2004:133). According to CLB, mid-intermediate speakers can speak about “familiar concrete topics at a descriptive level for five to ten minutes” (Pawlikowska-Smith 2000:54). Intermediate speakers perform best when assessed with non-personal, concrete topics (i.e. a Goldilocks narrative) in formal or semi-formal exchanges (i.e. an interview) and a familiar setting (i.e. a language house), rather than in group discussions or informal debates (Pawlikowska-Smith 2000:60). We demonstrated some storytelling traits of mid-beginner speakers, however we did not yet have traits indicative of high-intermediate speaking ability, for example we would have been completely out of our depth participating in a “seminar-style or business meeting, discussion, or debate” (Pawlikowska-Smith 2000:71). We had difficulty conversing outside of our interviews and formal lessons, though we had brief flashes of brilliance in our classroom lessons as can be seen in our third film.

11. *k^wu n’lǂq^wcin* (WE SPEAK CLEARLY): CHOPAKA IMMERSION HOUSE. In our third film, *k^wu n’lǂq^wcin* (*we speak clearly*): *Chopaka Immersion House*, we share personal reflections about our transformation. The six-minute documentary was filmed during our last month in the language house. *k^wu n’lǂq^wcin* represents a more open-ended assessment, a blending of the gathering process, fire-building, enjoying, and evaluating the flames. We explain in our own words that our language improved and we hope to become *n’lǂcin*, *true speakers*, one day. We discuss our language levels, the efficacy of TPCLA curriculum, our experience and the methods we used. Footage includes TP-

CLA lessons, curriculum and learning methods, scenes in and around the house and in the nearby forest, working with Sʔamtíc'aʔ in our garden, and narratives from our final interviews.



FIGURE 3. Scene from *kʷu nʔəqʷcin*. <http://youtu.be/O7fFMN-KSa4>

After the opening sequence the film proceeds to Sʔamtíc'aʔ' s interview-narrative. She sums up our hard work and transformation in the house:

Sʔamtíc'aʔ: kn aláʔ lʔ spəpʔlɪmsalqʷ, incá iskʷíst Sʔamtíc'aʔ. aláʔ cyʔáp iʔ smamím. x̣minksəlx caʔkʷ mipəwífn í ksnqilxʷcnmsəlx. uʔ aláʔəlx uʔ í kmax nqilxʷcn iʔ ksqʷlqʷíłtsəlx. əcmáytwixʷ, uʔ mamáyaʔməlx, uʔ wayʔ taʔlí nʔəqʷcínəlx.

Translation:

Sʔamtíc'aʔ: I am here at spəpʔlɪmsalqʷ [treeline, South end of Chopaka road], my name is Sʔamtíc'aʔ. The women arrived here. They wanted to learn to speak nqilxʷcn. They stayed together here and did nqilxʷcn immersion. They told each other stories and they studied. They now speak very clearly (Sʔamtíc'aʔ, *kʷu nʔəqʷcin* 00:33).

We capsíw's became better speakers from studying and living in immersion. Nʔəqʷcin literally means clear, comprehensible speech. As a language-level I believe it indicates we moved through the difficult kʔlpʷxʷinaʔ, *holes poked in ears*, (the silent, or comprehension phase, a shy, inaudible phase) and qʷlqʷlitiʔst, *first speech*, a phase where we are difficult to understand, into a phase where we have clear (ʔaqʷ) voices—a profound transformation. This does not mean that we don't make a *lot* of errors in our speech—we do—or that our speech is not simple—it is. However, nʔəqʷcin means that we are clearly audible and are comprehensible to others—an Elder would be able to understand us though perhaps with difficulty. nʔəqʷcin means there is still a long way to go, but we have found our voice. This is no small feat for adult Indigenous language learners, considering the generations of language loss, the damage wrought by colonization and residential schools, and the newness of sequential curriculum.

A kitchen scene following Sʔamtíc'aʔ' s interview illustrates what nʔəqʷcin sounds like. Our immersion activity that day was making frybread with Sʔamtíc'aʔ and in

the scene Staʔqʷáɫqs opens the oven door and says (in what can only be described as nʔəqʷcin, a clearly audible voice), “Oh, lut lkalátʔ kn nstils . . . ! (Oh, [itʔs] not bread? I thought [it was bread]!).” Sʔamtícʔaʔ is heard in the background saying, “snčáçíɫlaʔxʷ”, *frybread*. Humor and confusion often accompanied our immersion conversations.

Many scenes illustrate nʔəqʷcin speech in practice activities with TPCLA’s Nʔsyilxcn 2 textbook. In one scene (2:11) Cʔərʔtups and Prasát are working through a partner exercise about bird behavior. Cʔərʔtups, reading from the exercise, asks Prasát in a clear voice, “stim a cʔilsts iʔ cʔrisʔ”, *what do kingfishers eat?*, and Prasát answers, in a similarly clear voice, “iʔ cʔris cʔilsts iʔ qaʔəɫx”, *kingfishers eat fish*.

In a later scene the capsiwʔs are studying another chapter from Nʔsyilxcn 2 on fish species and behavior. The scene shows us working from open textbooks and repeating sentences after a CD recording of Sʔamtícʔaʔ (03:25). The sentences, repeated twice, were, “laʔkín iʔ kisú kʔa caʔúʔsaʔmʔ”, *where do Coho salmon spawn?*, and, “kʔl sʔatitkʷ ul cuʔcuʔíxaʔ kʔa caʔúʔsaʔmʔ”, *Coho salmon spawn in creeks and rivers*. All TPCLA textbooks are designed so learners can interact in groups and in pairs for maximum language use. Each lesson progresses from simple repetition to constructing original sentences. This is when language gets a little more complex and interesting. The fish-behavior lesson continued in a later scene, with a question-and-answer exercise designed to elicit original responses. Cʔərʔtups and Prasát exchanged original sentences, reproduced below. Cʔərʔtups, reading the question from the textbook, asks Prasát when Trout migrate from the ocean:

Cʔərʔtups: (4:12) Pə́nkin iʔ xʷəxʷmína ə́ɫɫak kɫ səlɫʷʔitkʷ ?

Prasát: hmmm, cmay . . . ǵipcm?

Cʔərʔtups: iʔ xʷəxʷmína lut ʔa cʔimx.

Prasát: oohhh . . . lut acmistín . . .

Cʔərʔtups: iʔ xʷəxʷmína lut ʔa cʔimx . . . lut ʔa cʔimx iʔ xʷəxʷmína kɫ səlɫʷʔitkʷ.

Prasát: ohhh, ki. níkxəná! . . . ǵaxt! (*kʷu ʔayncút*)

Translation:

Cʔərʔtups: (4:12) When do trout return from the ocean?

Prasát: mmmm, maybe . . . Spring?

Cʔərʔtups: Trout don’t migrate.

Prasát: Oohhh . . . I didn’t know . . .

Cʔərʔtups: Trout don’t migrate . . . trout don’t migrate from the ocean.

Prasát: Ohhh, yes. Gosh! . . . [you are] quick! (*group laughing*).

We were laughing because it had turned out to be a trick question and Cʔərʔtups had quietly ‘schooled’ us on the non-migratory lifeways of trout, adding her ecological knowledge to the lesson.

In our filmed interviews we commented on our progress. Each of us expressed that our speaking had improved. We attributed our success to hard work, immersion, and TPCLA’s excellent curriculum:

Sʔímlaʔxʷ: kn ntils unixʷ, kn qʷlqʷilt mis ʔast ʔapnáʔ ʔl ʔsápi, aʔi . . . ʔi kn mut ʔ citxʷtət nqilxʷcn ʔ čupáq, uʔ kʷu qʷaʔqʷʔál nqilxʷcn yʔat iʔ sʔəlʔaʔlt. uʔ kʷu ʔl taʔlí ʔast iʔ sʔaʔúms ʔəyánt[isəlx] ʔl ʔAñn uʔ Sʔamtícaʔ. uʔ yʔat sʔəlʔʔalt ckić Sʔamtícaʔ uʔ kʷu [c]qʷaʔqʷʔál nqilxʷcn (02:19).

ǺʷnámǺʷnam: kʷu mipnwiʔn yaʔt iʔ ʔyankxó, Sʔamtícaʔ naʔʔ ʔAñn naʔʔ ʔǺʷqʷčwíyaʔ, iʔ scʔʷulsəlx. yʔat iʔ ʔəymin uʔ iʔ sʔaʔác (03:06).

Translation:

Sʔímlaʔxʷ: I think true, I speak better now [than] long ago [before], because . . . I live in our nqilxʷcn house in Chopaka, and we speak nqilxʷcn all [every] day. We also have very good books write [written] by Chris Parkin and Sʔamtícaʔ. And every day Sʔamtícaʔ arrived and we spoke nqilxʷcn (02:19).

ǺʷnámǺʷnam: We learned all the Paul Creek—Sʔamtícaʔ, Chris Parkin and LaRae Wiley’s—work. All the papers and books (03:06).

In our filmed interviews we commented that we now believed advanced proficiency was possible. Five months of transformation had given us the tools and the commitment to continue on the road to proficiency. I included four English sentences from Prasát’s English interview because we did not yet have the ability to explain the abstract concept *fluency* (in fact, I only learned the term n’ʔłcin in time for ǺʷnámǺʷnam’s interview). In the dialogue, reproduced in the introduction to this article, I ask Prasát (in English) if she believes she will be fluent one day. She replies:

Prasát: I believe I’m gonna be fluent. I believe I will be fluent before I leave this world. It’s gonna take me a while, but—I feel that for all of us, we’re on the edge of something (1:41).

ǺʷnámǺʷnam’s interview (shared in the beginning of this article) concludes the film with her hope that she will one day be a ‘true’ speaker like her grandparents:

ǺʷnámǺʷnam: lut ʔə titíyam iʔ scʔʷultət. taʔlí xəčxačt. naxəml incá kn səc mipnwiʔn nqʷlqʷilt. uʔ . . . yaʔtmín qʷlqʷilt nixʷ, uʔ nixʷ, ul nixʷ (04:10).

Sʔímlaʔxʷ: haʔ kʷ ntils, anwí, naqs sʔəlʔʔalt kʷ ksñtʔłcin ʔ nqilxʷcn? (04:47)

ǺʷnámǺʷnam: kn musłs. kn ʔə qʷlqʷilt nqilxʷcn . . . kn nqilxʷcnm . . . iscqʷlqʷilt ʔtʔalt, uʔ cxiʔ t’ inʔxəčxəp, uʔ Syilx iʔ cawtət (05:20).

Translation:

ǺʷnámǺʷnam: Our work wasn’t easy. It was very hard. But, I am learning to speak. And . . . I need [to] speak more, and more, and more (03:43).

Sʔímlaʔxʷ: Do you think one day you will be n’ʔłcin, *a straight, true speaker?* (04:47)

ǺʷnámǺʷnam: I hope so. When I talk nqilxʷcn . . . I speak nqilxʷcn . . . my speech will be ʔtʔalt (straight and true), like my grandparents, and our Syilx ways of being (05:20).

12. INDIGENOUS FILM AND FILMED LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS. This section describes the potential of film and internet platforms for Indigenous research, language speaking assessment, learning, documentation and providing learning motivation. Personal stories are of paramount importance in Syilx methodology. Film is therefore suited to Syilx research and dissemination because it honors individual voices and stories and allows personal narrative to take a primary role (Giard 2006, Jack 2010). Our narratives, presented on multimedia and film can ‘cut space,’ or forge a path, for Okanagan scholars within the colonial constructs of the academy (Jack 2010:3–19).

There are only three North-American Indigenous-language feature length films that I know of. An early language revitalization film was an Arapaho community’s version of the feature-length Disney film *Bambi*, filmed entirely in their own language, described by Stephen Greymorning (2001). *Atanarjuat* is a recent excellent example of a feature-length Indigenous film, filmed entirely in the Inuit language, depicting an Inuit story structure, with English subtitles (Knopf 2008). A Navajo-dubbed *Star Wars* was re-released in 2013 by the The Navajo Nation Museum in Arizona with voices from seventy voice-actors representing five Navajo dialects (Boone 2013, Schwartz 2013).

Film is well suited to language documentation in order to record and safeguard the spoken language (Hinton 2001a). However, while essential, language documentation should not be the end-goal of any language revitalization effort (Hinton 2001b). Rather, multimedia efforts should be directed towards teaching and learning aids (Hinton 2001a). Internet spaces are well suited to Indigenous voice because they can incorporate multimedia, personal stories and languages, and information can be made available to multiple diasporic users (Moore 2009, Landzelius 2006, Wemigwans 2008).

Google created a space for Indigenous languages to redefine themselves on the net in 2012: The Endangered Languages Project, at endangeredlanguages.com, designed for sharing advice and documenting endangered languages. The website was transitioned to Indigenous oversight in August 2012.⁸ The languages and information are provided by website managers and focus mainly on documentation, however users can add any information to the language pages. TPCLA uploaded much of their teaching materials, I uploaded my three films, the Sinixt Nation added one film, and a linguist John Lyon added six films. Colville-Okanagan currently has eighty-five submissions (as of Feb. 19, 2014), and learners can access video, audio, songs, textbooks and children’s books.

Endangered Languages: N’syilxcn

I found the process of filming, honoring our voices, enjoying the films in community, and assessing our progress provided valuable focus and learner motivation. I placed our films on YouTube and Endangeredlanguages.com in order to share our language journey with others, create a lasting record of our transformation, our methods, a preliminary assessment, and motivating proof that higher than beginner levels are possible

⁸ Endangeredlanguages.com is overseen by First Peoples’ Cultural Council (FPCC) and The Institute for Language Information and Technology (The Linguist List, Eastern Michigan University) in coordination with the Advisory Committee. Language information is provided by the Catalogue of Endangered Languages (ELCat), produced by the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and The Linguist List, Eastern Michigan University.

for Indigenous language learners.

The three videos posted from the language house may be the first example of a filmed Indigenous language assessment. If there has been very little written about Indigenous language assessments (Miller 2004, Peter et al. 2003), there has been even less written about *filmed* Indigenous language assessments. I can find only one academic reference to Indigenous filmed assessments, Leanne Hinton 2001d. Learners in the Master-Apprentice program are video taped approximately once a year answering questions and describing a picture (Hinton 2001b:222–223). Comments are solicited from the Masters about the apprentices' grammatical accuracy. The narratives are not compared to assessment strategies such as CLB or ACTFL, but are subjectively evaluated by trainers who do not understand the language. Trainers listen for what strike me as beginner traits such as one-word, short or long sentences, length of speech, frequent pauses, false starts, or a “flowing stream of words” and have “the idea in mind of someday comparing early assessments with later ones” (Hinton 2001b:222–223).

YouTube is increasingly becoming a platform for Indigenous language learners. A quick YouTube search of ‘Indigenous language’ yields nearly 5,000 results. One noteworthy YouTube contributor is Dustin Rivers, or Khelsilem. He is the subject of several films posted by Where Are Your Keys (WAYK), a learning method developed in Portland, Oregon (Arcand 2011).⁹ He posted his own film (linked below) entirely in the Squamish (Coast Salish) language, and started a website to support Squamish language revitalization and activism.

Dustin Rivers' film

YouTube has become a global platform for a wave of non-Indigenous language self-assessments and demonstrations. These people, described as ‘superlearners’ and ‘postmonolingual’ polyglots, are challenging themselves to learn multiple languages and document their progress on YouTube (Erard 2012). They spend up to fifteen hours a day studying languages from books and computers, doing sentence drills, journaling, talking out loud, logging their progress, generally finding ways to self-teach languages they have little exposure to, and some have received a measure of internet notoriety for their posted videos in multiple languages (Erard 2012). I believe super-learners' techniques could be of value to Indigenous second-language learners, particularly for languages without sequenced intensive adult classes. At the very least their achievements are a fascinating example of learning potential, commitment to long hours, and personal motivation. Perhaps superlearners can inspire Indigenous learners to challenge ourselves to post more videos in our languages.

13. CONCLUSIONS. According to our *sq̓əl̓x̓'cawt*, individuals must have the courage to share our stories and stand behind our personal views. We may need to contradict the *Syilx* value of quietness and find strength in our voices. This is particularly important for Indigenous language learners. Our quietness can hold us back from teaching and

⁹ To see his several films, type Dustin Rivers, Khelsilem, or WAYK into the YouTube browser. His website is squamishlanguage.com.

learning our languages (Meek 2007). My cohort and I created a language house in order to stem the erosion of our language, create a domain of use, support each other, and improve our speaking ability. We gathered our materials, mentors, and courage and began to speak. We also proved a simple but often argued point—Indigenous language *can* be learned by adults in a classroom. Hard work and concentrated study is effective for learning our language.

There is continuing resistance in our communities to embrace programs such as ours, partly due to resistance to non-traditional learning pathways, to the hard work of Grizzly’s den, to new second-language learning strategies, to being taught by learners rather than Elders, and the sheer difficulty of fitting hundreds of hours of intensive learning into existing institutional structures. My cohort and I achieved 420 hours of dedicated immersion study in five months, or the equivalent of ten university classes. My personal N’syilxcn study time adds up to 1,000 intensive hours, including hours spent teaching and studying TPCLA material before and after the house.

One of the great achievements of our program is that three of our cohort were youth under thirty. I take heart from Hawaiian language programs, and words by Hawaiian language activists, Kauanoe Kamana and William Wilson, among the first to raise their children in Hawaiian. Kamana and Wilson stress, “The key demographic in reversing language shift is young people ages 12 to 30. For this demographic to ensure the survival of their language they must learn their ancestral language fluently, maintain fluency by daily peer-group use, pass the language on to their own children . . .” (Kamana and Wilson 2009:375).

Intensive transformation such as ours exposes learners to associated stresses and anxieties particular to our colonial context (McIvor 2012). The stresses involved in achieving n’łəq’cin were high, and it was important to support each other, particularly as we were without a teacher. In retrospect, I might recommend that learners not attempt full immersion (other than in-class time with sequenced curriculum) until they have achieved at least high-beginner. I would also recommend that learners wait until intermediate to attempt immersion with Elders as they will benefit more when they are better able to understand each other, engage in activities, and keep a dialogue going. I highly recommend following a comprehensive curriculum such as TPCLA’s, and using full immersion during lessons. I highly recommend the language house model because it is essential to remove learners from the distractions of English and daily life. Our language house was operationally a classroom-style learning venue, a sort of mini N’syilxcn university with dormitory attached.

The language house created a safe, motivating space, removed from outside distractions, where we were able to put in hundreds of hours and move from k’lp’x’ina?, *quiet comprehension phase*, to n’łəq’cin, *starting to make a clear noise*, or in the words of international assessment benchmarks from mid-beginner to low-intermediate (ACTFL 2012, CLB 2006, Miller 2004). We are able to storytell and are comprehensible to Elders—a proud achievement for us. This does not mean that we do not have a long way to go—we do. Or that we don’t make hundreds of errors, or that we can talk about abstract concepts—we can’t. The proof of our methods is clear, by watching *Goldilocks I* and *II*, in that we improved as speakers in a relatively short period of time. We find ourselves emerging from Grizzly’s den into a world where we, like our Elders, are not understood

by our communities and are lonely for our language, however we have a responsibility to become speakers, share our learning and bring our languages back to community.

The N'syilxcn language continues to be taught through TPCLA materials both in British Columbia and Washington. C'ər'tups, Prasát and I had the honor of co-teaching the fourth TPCLA book to fifteen adults in a new language house in Inchelium, Washington, in an intensive four-week course at the Inchelium Language and Culture Association in 2012. The graduates were approximately n'łəq^wcin, or low-intermediate. Twelve people studied the fifth TPCLA book in the summer of 2013 in Keremeos BC, as soon as Chris Parkin completed writing it. There are prayers and discussions about forming a new language house and a new cohort of learners this year.

Chris Parkin and LaRae Wiley created an immersion school in Spokane Washington which now runs from preschool to grade four. Their teachers teach in full N'syilxcn immersion all day in the classroom, and study TPCLA material for two hours every afternoon. I believe they have the best shot at becoming advanced speakers. The sequential TPCLA textbooks and associated computer games have been built in three Interior Salish languages and are being taught to full-time cohorts in Kalispel Washington, Pend d'Oreille Montana, and Spokane Washington.

Groups of advanced adult speakers are key to Indigenous language revitalization at this critical moment in our histories. Grizzly's dens are a key component. Time in Grizzly's dens (in other words, two years following sequenced curriculum and guided immersion with Elders) is a critical period in adult Indigenous language learners' transformation. For continued success of our language programs we need to embrace second-language acquisition techniques including assessment and be embraced ourselves by a network of support from our communities. Passing from k'lp'x^wina? to n'łłcin, or *true speech*, takes time, courage, practice and effort on the part of the adult learner. It also takes dedicated activism on the part of teachers who often have to organize their own grassroots intensive classes, as we did. My cohort and I are lucky there are six TPCLA textbooks from beginner to advanced, and we plan to continue in our quest towards n'łłcin. The language house demonstrated that intensive classroom-based learning created a group of intermediate speakers. These speakers, including myself, now have the responsibility to create domains of use, immersion classrooms, university spheres, and homes, and in the process, become advanced speakers. To move beyond n'łəq^wcin we know what we need to do. ǂ^wnamǂ^wnam said it perfectly, in *k^wu n'łəq^wcin* (04:10):

ya^łtmín q^wəlq^wilt nix^w, ul nix^w, ul nix^w.

I need to speak more, and more, and more.

GLOSSARY of N'syilxcn terms

capsíw's	sisters, plural, kinship term
captíkʷł	Syilx stories, from ancient times (also spelled chapteekwl)
cawt	role, responsibility, way of being, the thing one <i>does</i> , also caʔwt
k'lp'xʷínaʔ	holes cut in the ears; the first stage of N'syilxcn acquisition, when a person begins to comprehend language
n'łəqʷcin	starting to be heard/make a noise, become more clear voiced, from łəqʷ, plain to see; the third stage of N'syilxcn acquisition
N'syilxcn	the language spoken by Syilx and Snʔayctx (Siníxt, Arrow Lakes) people, also spelled Nsyilxcn, Nsəłxcin, N'səłxcin, nqilxʷcn
n'łłcin	straightened or true speech, the final stage of N'syilxcn acquisition when speech contains fewer errors and is like Elders' speech
nqilxʷcn	the language (language of sqilxʷ, the people), also spelled nqilxʷcn
qʷlqʷłtiʔst	first speech, short utterances, similar to a child's speech; the second stage of N'syilxcn acquisition, when words are formed
sqilxʷ	person; Indigenous person; animal being (tmixʷ) with the power to dream in a cyclical way
sqəlxʷcawt	sqilxʷ + cawt, way of being; also Bill Cohen's pedagogical model, also spelled sqilxʷcút, sqəlxʷcaʔwt
Syilx	N'syilxcn speaking person; stranded together like a rope; refers to Okanagan-Colville, Interior Salish people and territory

REFERENCES

- ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). 2012. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL. www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/public/ACTFLProficiencyGuidelines2012_FINAL.pdf. (25 November, 2012.)
- Arcand, Joi T. 2011. Language warrior. *Pacific Rim Magazine*. www2.langara.bc.ca/prm/2011/articles/warrior.html. (25 November, 2012.)
- Asher, James J. 2009. *Learning another language through actions: Expanded 7th edition*. Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions, Inc.
- Boone, Steven 2013. “Star Wars” in Navajo. *Balder & Dash*. <http://www.rogerebert.com/balder-and-dash/star-wars-in-navajo>. (19 February 2014.)
- Cardinal, Douglas & Jeannette C. Armstrong. 1991. *The Native creative process: A collaborative discourse between Douglas Cardinal and Jeannette Armstrong*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books.
- CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). 2001. *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CLB (Canadian Language Benchmarks). 2006. *Companion tables to the Canadian language benchmarks 2000*. Ottawa: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- Cohen, William A. 2010. *School failed Coyote, so Fox made a new school: Indigenous Okanagan knowledge transforms educational pedagogy*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia dissertation.
- Dauenhauer, Nora & Richard L. Dauenhauer. 1998. Technical, ideological, and emotional issues in reversing language shift: Examples from southeast Alaska. In Lenore A. Grenoble & Lindsay J. Whaley (eds.), *Endangered languages*, 57–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dornyei, Zoltan. 2003. *Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Edmonds, Katarina, Ngaere Roberts, Peter Keegan, Waldo Houia, & Hemi Dale. 2013. Kaiaka Reo: Reo-Ā-Waha Ki Te Motu: The development of Māori oral language proficiency progressions. Report to the Ministry of Education New Zealand. New Zealand.
- Ellis, Rod. 1997. *Second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Erard, Michael. 2012. *Babel no more: The search for the world's most extraordinary language learners*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- First Peoples' Culture Council of British Columbia (FPCC). 2012. *Nsyilxcən: Language needs assessment: First Peoples' Language Map of British Columbia*. Victoria, BC: First Peoples' Language, Heritage & Culture Council. <http://maps.fphlcc.ca/nsyilxcen>. (25 November, 2012.)
- Fishman, Joshua. 1993. Reversing language shift: Successes, failures, doubts and dilemmas. In Ernst H. Jahr (ed.), *Language conflict and language planning*, 69–81. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Giard, Monique. 2006. Bullycide prevention sqilxwcut, through filmmaking: An urban Native youth performance project. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 29(1). 58.

- Gionson, T. Ilihia. 2009. Native language revitalization efforts learn from Hawai'i. *Ka Wai Ola Loa: the living water of Oha* (www.oha.org) 2 'Apelila 2009 mid-month extra edition.
- Greymorning, Stephen. 2001. Reflections on the Arapaho language project, or when Bambi spoke Arapaho and other tales of Arapaho language revitalization efforts. In Leanne Hinton & Ken Hale (eds.), *The green book of language revitalization in practice*, 287–298. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Hammerly, Hector. 1987. The immersion approach: Litmus test of second language acquisition through classroom communication. *The Modern Language Journal* 71(4), 395–401.
- Haynes, Erin, Charles Stansfield, Caylie D. Gnyra, Mallory Schleif & Sandra Anderson. 2010. *Review of the literature on the assessment of Indigenous languages*. Prepared for the Bureau of Indian Education. Rockville, MD.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2001a. Audio-video documentation. In Leanne Hinton & Ken Hale (eds.), *The green book of language revitalization in practice*, 265–271. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2001b. Language revitalization: An overview. In Leanne Hinton & Ken Hale (eds.), *The green book of language revitalization in practice*, 3–18. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2001c. The Master-Apprentice language learning program. In Leanne Hinton & Ken Hale (eds.), *The green book of language revitalization in practice*, 217–237. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Hinton, Leanne. 2011. Language revitalization and language pedagogy: New teaching and learning strategies. *Language and Education* 25(4), 307–318.
- Hval, Cindy. 2013. Tribes keep language alive: recent conference led by the Kalispels draws hundreds of participants. In *The Spokesman-Review*. Pp. 3, Vol. March 14, 2013 in Washington Voices. Spokane, WA <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2013/mar/14/tribes-keep-language-alive/>. (27 March, 2014).
- Jack, Michelle. 2010. *Inca sənqsilxʷ: (I am all my relations)*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University dissertation.
- Jackson, Frederick H. & Marsha A. Kaplan. 2001. Lessons learned from fifty years of theory and practice in government language teaching. In James E. Alatis & Ai-Hui Tan (eds.), *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1999: Language in our time*, 71–87. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Johnson (Sʔimlaʔxʷ), Michele K. 2013. nʔəqʷcin (clear speech): 1,000 hours to mid-intermediate Nʔsyilxcn proficiency (Indigenous language, Syilx, Okanagan-Colville, nqilxʷcn, Interior Salish). Kelowna, BC: University of British Columbia-Okanagan dissertation.
- Johnson (Sʔimlaʔxʷ), Michele K. 2012. Kʷu sqʷaʔqʷaʔəlʷx (we begin to speak): Our journey within Nʔsyilxcn (Okanagan) language revitalization. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 35(1), 79–97.
- Johnson (Sʔimlaʔxʷ), Michele K. 2012. *Entering the Grizzly's den: Achieving Nʔsyilxcn (Okanagan) proficiency as adult learners*. Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium (SILS). Kamloops, BC.

- Kamana, Kauanoë, and William H. Wilson. 2009. Indigenous youth bilingualism from a Hawaiian activist perspective. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 8(5). 369–375.
- Knopf, Kerstin. 2008. *Decolonizing the lens of power: Indigenous films in North America*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, B.V.
- Krashen, Stephen D. 1984. Immersion: Why it works and what it has taught us. *Language and Society* 12. 61–64.
- Krashen, Stephen D. & Tracy D. Terrell. 1988. *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. San Francisco, CA: The Alemany Press.
- Landzelius, Kyra. 2006. *Native on the net: Indigenous and diasporic peoples in the virtual age*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lennon, Paul. 1990. Investigating fluency in EFL: A quantitative approach. *Language Learning* 40(3). 387–417.
- McIvor, Onowa. 2005. *Building the nests: Indigenous language revitalization in Canada through early childhood immersion programs*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia thesis.
- McIvor, Onowa. 2012. *Ikakwiw nihiyawiyān: I am learning [to be] Cree*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia dissertation.
- Meek, Barbara. 2007. Respecting the language of Elders: Ideological shift and linguistic discontinuity in a northern Athapascan community. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 17(1). 23–43. doi: 10.1525/jlin.2007.17.1.23.
- Miller, John Wilson (Jack). 2004. *Assessing First Nations language proficiency*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia dissertation.
- Moore, Rebecca. 2009. Indigenous mapping: Emerging cultures on the Geoweb. 2.0 conference. Presentation at the where 2.0 conference. San Jose, CA. 19–21 May, 2009. <http://whereconf.com/where2009/public/schedule/detail/7891>. (25 November, 2012.)
- NILI (Northwest Indian Language Institute). 2012. Northwest Indian Language Institute (NILI): Native language proficiency benchmarks. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon. <http://pages.uoregon.edu/nwili/language-proficiency-benchmarks>. (25 November, 2012.)
- Norris, Mary Jane. 2011. Aboriginal languages in Canada: Generational perspectives on language maintenance, loss, and revitalization. In David Long & Olive Patricia Dickason (eds.), *Visions of the heart: Canadian Aboriginal issues*, 113–148. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Parkin, Christopher. 2012. Joshua Fishman and Salish revitalization (online photo-narrative). interiorsalish.com/revitalizingsalish.html. (10 December, 2012.)
- Pawlikowska-Smith, Grazyna. 2000. *Canadian language benchmarks: English as a second language for adults*. Ottawa, Ontario: Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks.
- Peter, Lizette, Ella Christie, Marilyn Cochran, Dora Dunn, Lula Elk, Ed Fields, JoAnn Fields, Tracy E. Hirata-Edds, Anna Huckaby, Margaret Raymond, Deputy Chief Hastings Shade, Gloria Sly, George Wickliffe & Akira Y. Yamamoto. 2003. Assessing the impact of total immersion on Cherokee language revitalization: A culturally responsive approach. In Jon Reyhner, Octaviana Trujillo, Roberto Luis Carrasco & Louise Lockard (eds.), *Nurturing Native languages*, 7–23. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

- Peter, Lizette & Tracy E. Hirata-Edds. 2006. Using assessment to inform instruction in Cherokee language revitalisation. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 9(5). 643–658.
- Peterson, Sarah, LaRae Wiley & Christopher Parkin. 2006–2013. *Series of 6 N'syilxcn textbooks, audio CDs, and teaching manuals: Nsəlxcin 1: A beginning course in Okanagan Salish (with 4 CDs); Captikʷl 1: Okanagan stories for beginners (with 4 CDs); Nsəlxcin 2: An intermediate course in Okanagan Salish (with 4 CDs); Captikʷl 2: Okanagan stories for intermediate students (with 4 CDs); Nsəlxcin 3: An advanced course in Okanagan Salish (with CDs) (in-press); Captikʷl 3: Okanagan stories for advanced students (with CDs) (in-press)*. Keremeos, BC: The Paul Creek Language Association, the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, and Salish School of Spokane.
- Richards, Merle & David Kanatawahkon Maracle. 2002. An intensive Native language program for adults: The instructors' perspective. *McGill Journal of Education* 37(3). 371–385.
- Rifkin, Benjamin. 2003. Oral proficiency learning outcomes and curricular design. *Foreign Language Annals* 36(4). 582–588. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2003.tb02148.x.
- Rifkin, Benjamin, Margaret E. Malone, Donna Christian & Dora E. Johnson. 2005. Attaining high levels of proficiency: Challenges for foreign language education in the United States. Washington, DC: *Center for Applied Linguistics*.
- Schwartz, David. 2013. "Native American tribe plans to dub 'Star Wars' in Navajo." *Reuters*, May 2. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/02/entertainment-us-usa-arizona-starwars-idUSBRE94101P20130502>. (23 October, 2013.)
- Smith, Graham Hingangaroa. 2000. Protecting and respecting Indigenous knowledge. In Marie Battiste (ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*, 209–224. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Smith, Graham Hingangaroa. 2003. *Indigenous struggle for the transformation of education and schooling, Transforming institutions: Reclaiming education and schooling for Indigenous peoples, Keynote address*. Alaskan Federation of Natives (AFN) Convention. Anchorage, AK. October, 2013.
- Underriner, Janne, Judith Fernandes & Marnie Atkins. 2012. *Native American language benchmarks and functions to guide curriculum development*. Paper presented at the 19th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium (SILS). Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC. 17–19 May, 2012.
- Underwood, Emily. 2009. "The lost art of listening: Can the Northern Arapaho save their language?" *High Country News: For people who care about the West*, November 23.
- Vandergrift, Laurens. 2006. *New Canadian perspectives: Proposal for a common framework of reference for languages for Canada*. Ottawa, Ontario: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- Warner, Sam L. No'eau. 1999. *Kuleana: The right, responsibility, and authority of Indigenous peoples to speak and make decisions for themselves in language and cultural revitalization*. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 30(1). 68–93. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3195982>.
- Wemigwans, Jennifer. 2008. Indigenous worldviews: Cultural expression on the World Wide Web. *Canadian Woman Studies* 26(3/4). 31.

Wickwire, Wendy C. 2001. The Grizzly gave them the song: James Teit and Franz Boas interpret twin ritual in Aboriginal British Columbia, 1897–1920. *American Indian Quarterly* 25(3). 431.

Michele K. Johnson (Sʔímlaʔxʷ)
michelekjohnson@gmail.com